

The SWORD of the LORD

Edited by JOHN R. RICE.

"And they cried, The Sword of the Lord, and of Gideon." Judges 7:20

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Irwin A. Moon Among Soldiers and Sailors

Help Soul-Winning Work Sponsored by Moody Bible Institute. Thousands Seeing Scientific Demonstration. Many Being Saved.

Evangelist Irwin A. Moon, who with Tom Olson had the booth at the San Francisco World's Fair giving out the gospel with scientific demonstrations to hundreds of thousands, sponsored by Christian business men, is now engaged in taking the gospel to soldiers and sailors of the armed forces, with great blessing. They crowd to hear him, doubts about the Bible and God are often dispelled and many souls are saved. Praise the Lord for all the evangelistic work done to save the souls of boys who may soon be in battle or be sunk at sea, or shot down from the air. The editor had a letter from Dr. Will H. Houghton telling how Moody Bible Institute was sponsoring Mr. Moon's work among soldiers and sailors, and we asked to be allowed to cooperate in getting this matter before the people. Dr. Houghton graciously had material sent us. The editor himself sent his check and hopes that thousands of others will feel led to send a gift, large or small, to Dr. Houghton at Moody, for this soul-winning work.

From his trailer packed with two tons of fine scientific equipment, Mr. Moon can pull forth a surprising number of scientific demonstrations. For instance, by the use of his high frequency transformer he discharges a million volts through his body. This demonstration is usually given the final night in the series of meetings and is used to illustrate the sermon on the new birth.

In addition, Mr. Moon makes metal float in space, he makes tiny living creatures, two million times enlarged, move as prehistoric monsters by means of his micropolariscope; by use of his high-gain amplifier the rush of molecules inside of a bar of ordinary steel can be heard, living organisms die before the eyes of the audience under an invisible death ray; he demonstrates the talking flashlight; he

records the human voice inside a tiny thread of steel; and by mixing cold chemicals he produces liquid light. By means of lapse-time photography Moon is able to show the growth of a plant from a seed to full blossom. This demonstration he calls his time compressor.

These demonstrations are never used as merely scientific demonstrations, but rather are always tied to a strong evangelistic ministry. For instance, one chaplain from the West coast wrote of Mr. Moon's work like this: "Mr. Moon's grasp of scientific knowledge, his obvious spiritual enthusiasm, coupled with his humility and his enthusiastic support of all chaplains, has brought assets to the work of the chaplains which simply cannot be measured."

By actual count at March Field, 4000 officers and men attended these lectures. The interest in spiritual things was so great that groups surrounded him for hours after the close of the lecture. Here is Dr. Houghton's letter:

MOODY BIBLE INSTITUTE
of Chicago
153 Institute Place

June 24, 1942

Dear Friend:

How I wish you could share the thrill I have just enjoyed in helping Irwin A. Moon get started in his work with soldiers and sailors. The photograph gives you an idea

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HYMAN APPELMAN REPORTS
BLESSED REVIVAL

Kansas City, Missouri
July 8, 1942

Dear Prayer Partner:

God gave us 240 in Bessemer, praise His Holy Name. Thank you for your unceasing intercessions. Pray for us now in Kansas City, Missouri, July 6th to August 2nd.

God bless you always,

Hyman Appelman

'As in the Days of Noah'

BY EVANGELIST CHARLES E. FULLER

(Preached Sunday, February 15, 1942, over Old Fashioned Revival Hour. Stenographically Reported.)

Take your Bible and turn to Matthew the 24th chapter, verses 37 to 39. Will you listen carefully to God's Word? Here it is:

"But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be.

"For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark. "And knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Especially these words, "and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be."

Now just a word or two about the background, the setting of the verses I have just read. The Lord Jesus Christ before Calvary was with His disciples on the mount of Olives. Some questions were asked there, especially as we read in the third verse of that chapter where the disciples came unto Him, saying, "Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?" And in answer to these questions, especially to the answer of that one question, "What shall be the sign of thy coming, and of the end of the age?" Christ

proceeds to tell His disciples certain things. "For many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many. And ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars; see that ye be not troubled." Will you notice carefully? "For all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places. All these are the beginning of sorrows."

And then dropping down to the twenty-first verse of this marvelous chapter it tells us after the church has been caught up (I will explain that to you in a moment), "Then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the world to this time, no, nor ever shall be." And then are verses 37 to 39 about the days of Noah being compared to the days in which we now are living. Christ coupled these two great outstanding events together, the days of Noah with His second coming, the day of the Lord, when Christ will return, taking vengeance on them who know not God and that obey not the gospel.

May I give a word of instruction? All those who are born again, saved, are not of that day, that is, the day of the Lord. We who are saved are looking, expecting eagerly watching and waiting for the day of Christ.



EVANGELIST CHARLES E. FULLER

Two Stages of Christ's Return

Now there are two stages to the Lord's return. He comes for His own, that is the day of Christ. Then there is an intervening time, a time in between that and the day of the Lord. When He comes in the day of the Lord, He will come as a thief in the night and will take vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel. So, for all Christ-rejecting, Christ-

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THE SIN OF PRAYERLESSNESS

TEXT: "God Forbid That I Should Sin Against the Lord in Ceasing to Pray for You." — I Samuel 12:23

BY EVANGELIST JOHN R. RICE

Prayerlessness is a horrible sin. For the lost sinner it is a part of his wicked rejection of Christ. For the child of God it is identical with backsliding. Prayerlessness is another name for unbelief. Prayerlessness is the father and partner of every vile sin, as much as the saloon is the father of drunkenness and lust is the father of adultery. There is not a vile sin in the world but what prayerlessness is a part of it and that real prayerfulness would have prevented it or cured it. Of itself prayerlessness is, I have no doubt, worse than murder, worse than adultery, worse than blasphemy. It is more fundamental. It more clearly reveals the heart. In fact, while murder, adultery and blasphemy may catch a person unaware, trapped by the carnal mind, prayerlessness is the very heart of the carnal mind itself, a state of alienation from God.

My greatest sin and yours, is prayerlessness. My failures are all prayer-failures. The lack of souls saved in my ministry is primarily because of lack of prayer, not because of lack of preaching. The withering away of joy in my heart, sometimes, is the fruit of prayerlessness. My indecision, my lack of wisdom, my lack of guidance comes directly out of my prayerlessness. All the times I have fallen into sin, have failed in my duties, have been bereft of power, or disconsolate for lack of comfort, I can charge to the sin of prayerlessness. Oh! horrible sin, the lack of prayer!

What is wrong with the churches is lack of true prayer. What is wrong with the preachers is this same sin, prayerlessness. What is

wrong with the pew is still that blighting sin, prayerlessness. For every sin, every failure, every lack God had a remedy and cure if we had sufficiently and effectively prayed, effectually prayed.

It is a sin when we pray and ask amiss that we might consume it on our own lust. It is a sin when we pray without faith. And it is sad beyond expression when wrong home life, when wrongs unrighted, when unforgiveness, or rebellion or distaste for the Bible or any secret love of sin hinders our prayers. But the great prayer-sin of all is simply not to pray! Our greatest trouble is not that we pray wrongly. Our greatest trouble, our greatest sin, perhaps, is that we pray little or do not pray at all! We have, perhaps, our formal phrases in which we simulate prayer. But often they are really little different from the Ave Marias and Pater Nosters of our Catholic friends, or the formal words on a Buddhist's prayer wheel. Prayer, in the sense of asking God for things as directly as a woman goes to the grocery store with her basket for groceries, or as a motorist drives into the gas station for gas and oil, or as a child says, "Pass the bread, please," — I say real prayer, definite, direct, determinedly going to God to get things, is an unknown and unexperienced process to most Christians. And this prayerlessness is back of all the fruitlessness and powerlessness and joylessness in the average Christian life.

The disciples begged Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray." They did not say, "Lord, teach us how to pray." They simply asked, "Lord,

teach us to pray." Oh, that the people of God would forsake their sin of prayerlessness and get down to prayer.

1. Proof That Prayerlessness Is a Sin

Do we need to prove it? Then first, prayerlessness is a sin since the Bible expressly calls it that. Samuel said to the children of Israel, "God forbid that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you" (I Sam. 12:23). The Holy Spirit of God put it in Samuel's heart to say it, and the same Holy Spirit of God had it recorded in the Bible for us, that to cease praying is a sin.

Second, many, many, many Scriptures command that Christians should pray. These Scripture passages even demand that we pray all the time, pray without ceasing.

First Thessalonians 5:17 says, "Pray without ceasing." And that verse has no immediate context. There are no modifications. There is the stark, bald command that Christians ought to pray literally without ceasing.

Again Jesus, "spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (Luke 18:1). Men ought always to pray and never give up! That is the command of Jesus Christ; not to obey it is sin.

The Christian is commanded to "put on the whole armour of God,"

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Irwin A. Moon illustrates New Birth with a million volts of electricity through his body, unharmed. Uses two tons of scientific equipment.

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THE SIN OF PRAYERLESSNESS

(Continued from page one)

the girdle of truth, breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the gospel of peace, the shield of faith, the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, "praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints" (Eph. 6:18).

There are many commands in the Bible that Christians should pray. Jesus warns His disciples more than once to watch and pray lest they should enter into temptation.

We see that repeatedly God tells the Christian to pray without ceasing, that men ought *always* to pray and not give up, praying always with all prayer. And any violation of God's plain commands is a sin. When we do not pray, then, we are rebels, we are disobedient children, we are in sin.

And note, please, the measure of our sin of prayerlessness. We ought to pray all the time, never ceasing. Anything less than constant prayer is thus disobedience and sin. If for a short season of time we do not pray as we ought, then we have sinned. And if that sinful disregard of prayer continues, with small intermissions, through hours and days and weeks and months, even years, as is true in the lives of many Christians, then prayerlessness is a long extended sin, is habitual sin, is veritably a life of sin. Long continued prayerlessness is the same kind of extended sin that drunkenness or the dope habit is, in that it is repeated, extended and habitual.

But how could one pray without ceasing? Is not that an impossible standard? I answer no, that the Bible can be taken at face value. God's standards are proper standards, and God's words say what they mean and mean what they say. Prayer ought to arise from the heart like the fragrance from burning incense on an altar day and night, all the time. The soul of a Christian can be so possessed of God, so hungry for His presence that both the conscious and the subconscious mind carry on the pleading, the searching for God's face and His will and way and work.

Here is an example. The baby sleeps in his crib, and when all the household is abed, mother settles down to rest. In the night there is a tiny whimper, and instantly the mother is awake. She was *listening*! She was watching over the little one, even while she slept. Her soul was so set on the care of the little one that while her conscious mind slept, the subconscious being took over the listening post at her ear and watched through the darkness.

In the West Texas cattle country where I grew up much of my boyhood work was done on a horse. Many a day I rode long hours, sometimes ten or twelve hours a day. Once after a long, heavy day it was far into the night when I wearied to exhaustion, turned my sorrel horse homeward. As he followed the long road across a ranch pasture, I sat upright in the saddle, sound asleep. When he came to the gate and stopped, I awoke. When I had opened the gate, gone through and closed it, again I slept in the saddle until the tired horse stopped at the corral gate. My muscles did their accustomed work of years when my eyelids shut and I slept. But part of me was conscious of my horse, my feet in the saddle, and the accustomed motion, and I awoke instantly when the horse stopped.

And dear friend, if a mother can be conscious of her babe when she sleeps, and a horseman can be con-

scious of his horse and maintain his equilibrium when he sleeps, cannot a Christian who with all his soul loves the Lord and longs for certain blessings which he seeks—cannot such a Christian still be conscious of God when he sleeps? One hypnotized carries out certain orders through the control of the subconscious mind, so it is foolish to say that we cannot do what God commands about prayer simply because our consciousness is directed to other business or because we sleep.

A few times — all too few, God forgive me! — I have waked from sleep to find myself in the very presence of God. Sometimes I have waked in the midst of conscious prayer. How great is our sin when we do not pray, since God has commanded us to pray without ceasing, to pray always, to pray with all prayer, always, for all the saints.

Every moment of prayerlessness, then, is a sin. Long continued prayerlessness is continual sin, habitual sin, a very living in sin, because it is disobedience to the plain and oft repeated command of our Heavenly Father and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Third, prayerlessness is a sin because it leaves the door open for all other sins.

That is made clear by the command of Jesus in Mark 14:38, "Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly is ready, but the flesh is weak." We are to pray and to watch or continue attentively in prayer as the only sure preventative of entering temptation. Similarly the command is given in Luke 22:40, "Pray that ye enter not into temptation." If the disciples needed that warning in the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus, how do we need it too!

In fact, in the Lord's Prayer, the model prayer for all who can truly call God, "Our Father which art in heaven," we are expressly taught to pray, "and lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil." Prayer is the remedy for temptation. Prayer is the way to defeat the evil one.

In this connection it is well to remember that "the whole armour of God" which we are commanded to put on "that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil," and again, "that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day," includes "Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints." (Eph. 6:11-18). Prayer defeats Satan. By prayer one may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil and to withstand in the evil day.

A Christian man who was enslaved by the tobacco habit came to me. "I can go about a half a day at a time, and then I just have to have a cigarette, it seems," he said. He told me how he prayed every day about the matter and for hours would seem to have the victory, but before the day was gone he would again fall into temptation and sin. I showed him that he had been given the victory by prayer for a little time, and that what he needed to do for continued victory was to pray more. He promised to pray every half hour if need be, to take time out from his work and go alone until he had victory and to continue that until permanent victory came. And thus he conquered the thing that had enslaved him.

Would not your speech have been different, dear friend, if you had prayed like David, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth," or "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer"? (Psalm 141: 3, 19:14). And if Peter had spent the time praying instead of sleeping in the Garden of Gethsemane, would not the outcome have been far better? Surely he fell into the snare because he did not pray. And so we, too, deny Jesus and curse and swear, it may be, before His enemies, because we are not strengthened in the secret place by prayer.

An old proverb says, "Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint upon his knees." And well he may, if that saint really, directly and persistently calls for God to help him against sin and to keep

him out of temptation and to defeat The Evil One.

The great John Bunyan, author of *Pilgrim's Progress* wrote, "Prayer will make a man cease from sin, as sin will entice a man to cease from prayer" (Works, volume I, page 65).

No doubt, then, all of our sins stem from our prayerlessness. No doubt in sincere and wholehearted prayer, in totalitarian prayer, is the remedy for and victory over our sins.

Fourth, for a final proof that prayerlessness is a sin, we need but examine the records concerning Bible Christians. How they prayed! If those who pleased God best prayed continually, prayed persistently, prayed through gloriously, then surely we sin when we do not pattern after them.

The best example is Jesus Himself. We are told that "he went up into a mountain apart to pray" (Matt. 14:23). People brought him little children that "he should put his hands on them, and pray" (Matt. 19:13). In the Garden of Gethsemane He said, "Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder" (Matt. 26:36). "He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed" (Mark 1:35). Again, "he departed into a mountain to pray" (Mark 6:46). Great multitudes came together to hear Him and to be healed, "And he withdrew himself into the wilderness, and prayed" (Luke 5:16). In the next chapter we are told, "And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God" (Luke 6:12). And most of us forget that when Jesus was on the mount of transfiguration, and was glorified before the disciples, He had gone there to pray, and "as he prayed, the fashion of his countenance was altered" (Luke 9:28,29).

Most of us have forgotten that Jesus was praying when the disciples asked Him to teach them to pray and He gave the Lord's Prayer. It was Jesus' praying that led to the great confession by Peter that Jesus was "the Christ of God," as you see in Luke 9:18-21. When Jesus said to His Father, "I knew that thou hearest me always" (John 11:42). He must have meant, too, that He prayed always. God forgive us that we do not pray like Jesus prayed. Our prayerlessness shows how we ignore God's commands to pattern after Jesus.

In Bible times the temple was literally "a house of prayer," and was intended to be that for all people. Bible Christians fasted, they prayed in sackcloth, they wept while they prayed, they often watched all night in prayer. Paul and Silas prayed at midnight in the jail at Philippi. A little group at the home of Mary prayed long hours until Peter was released from jail (Acts 12:3-17). Before Pentecost the apostles and Mary and the brothers of Jesus and some others continued with one accord in prayer and supplication" (Acts 1:14), until the power of the Holy Spirit came upon them as promised. Later when the apostles called for some deacons to take over the business of waiting on poor widows they promised, "But we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). — prayer first, preaching second! When saintly men got together at Antioch, Barnabas, Simeon, Lucius Manaen and Saul, they ministered to the Lord and fasted until the Holy Ghost said, "Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them." And then we are told they prayed more and fasted more, "And when they had fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them away." (Acts 13:1-3). That is the secret of all great missionary movements. "Prayer," "ministering to the Lord," "fasting," and again "prayer and fasting!" All of our alibis for the lack of the power of the Spirit of God which was manifest in New Testament times can properly be ignored. The real difference between New Testament churches and the churches of today, between New Testament preachers and the preachers of today, between New Testament Christians and the Christians of today is in the matter of prayer, and the power that comes through prayer! If New Testament Christians had the right idea of serving the Lord, then we have the wrong idea. If they were right so to pray, then we are wrong not to pray as much as they did. If we do not fol-

low the examples of the heroes of the Bible in prayer, then our prayerlessness is sin.

And if we compare ourselves with missionaries, Carey, Judson, and Hudson Taylor, how glaring is the sin of our prayerlessness.

When our prayerlessness is compared with the prayers of Brainerd who spent days in fasting and prayer, often kneeling in the snow in the primitive forests begging God for the salvation of Indians, how insincere seem our excuses for not winning souls. When we read of the long vigils of Charles G. Finney in woods or hayloft, or in days of fasting and prayer, ending in a new and fresh baptism of power again and again, and in marvelous revivals and in hundreds of souls saved, how can we excuse our sin of prayerlessness! When we learn how George Muller prayed and fed thousands of orphan children, how he prayed and sent forth missionaries to the end of the world, how he prayed and gave Bibles and books and tracts by the multiplied thousands, receiving over seven million dollars from God without ever asking man for a penny, when he pleaded with God and argued with God and knew what it was daily to wait on God — compared with Muller what sinners we are in our prayerlessness!

II. The Sad Results of Prayerlessness

Aside from the fact that our prayerlessness opens the door to all sin, I call your attention to some tragic results of our prayerlessness.

First, God's people do not get what they ought to have. Many do not have daily necessities because they do not pray as we are commanded to pray, "Give us this day our daily bread." (Matt. 6:11). No doubt many of the afflicted are still afflicted because they have not obeyed God's command, "Is a n among you afflicted? let him pray." And many of the sick remain sick because they do not "call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord," as the Lord said, and so have not received the blessing promised that "the prayer of faith shall save the sick... and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him" (James 5:12-15). Many are undecided, in doubt about duty. They lack wisdom because they have not obeyed God when He commanded, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not" (James 1:5). Such Christians "have not, because they ask not." (James 4:2). They do not ask and therefore they do not receive. They do not seek and therefore they do not find. They do not knock and to them the door is not opened (Matt. 7:7, 8).

Sometimes there are other hindrances, but many, many times we simply have not because we ask not. Many of God's children go through this world as orphans, as if God did not love them, as if God were not able or were not willing to care for His own. How sad! Israel wandered forty years in the wilderness before entering the land of promise, which they could have had, which God wanted them to have, before I waited to marry until I had finished college and paid up school debts, and then my bride told me she would have married me before if I had asked her! So much of the poverty and frustration and lack of victory and joy comes to Christians simply because they do not pray. Oh, the results of prayerlessness!

Many Christians die prematurely because they do not pray. There are a number of Bible examples of this. For example, II Chronicles 16:12, 13 tells us, "And Asa in the thirty and ninth year of his reign was diseased in his feet, until his disease was exceeding great: yet in his disease he sought not to the Lord, but to the physicians. And Asa slept with his fathers, and died in the one and fortieth year of his reign." Asa was sick. In his disease he sought not to the Lord but to the physicians, and he died. The clear implication is that if he had prayed he would have lived.

In I Chronicles 10:13, 14 we are told about King Saul's death, "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; and enquired not of the Lord: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of

Jesse." Here it is clearly inferred that Saul died for his transgressions, and particularly for asking counsel of a spiritualistic medium instead of praying to the Lord.

On the other hand, King Hezekiah was "sick unto death." God sent Isaiah to say to him, "Thus saith the Lord, set thine house in order: for thou shalt die, and not live" (Isaiah 38:1). But Hezekiah turned his face to the wall and prayed and God raised him up and gave him fifteen years. Clearly Hezekiah would have died according to God's first plan. When he prayed God changed His plan!

The Bible does not teach that one who prays may live forever without dying, but it certainly does teach that many die prematurely when they might live longer with great blessing if they prayed.

Likewise, other people die because we do not pray. For example God had planned to destroy the whole nation Israel and make of Moses and his family a new nation, but Moses prayed and God forgave him and did not do "the evil which he thought to do unto his people" (Ex. 32:9-14).

It seems likely that Abraham's prayer saved Lot alive out of Sodom. And we know God heard the prayers of Esther and her maidens and of Mordecai and his friends to save the lives of the Jews who were to be destroyed by Haman's conspiracy, as told in the book of Esther. God would stop the war and give us victory sooner if we prayed as we ought, and so millions of lives would be saved.

So, because of our prayerlessness we miss many, many blessings. People are sick when they might be well. Some die when they might live. Businesses fail when they might prosper. And people go hungry and without proper clothing who might be covered and fed to the glory of God if they would but pray.

Second, another sad result of our wicked prayerlessness is that God's work suffers and languishes. In II Chronicles 7:14 God plainly promises to hear His people when they come in humility and prayer and supplication and repentance. We know many, many revivals in Bible times came because of seasons of prayer and waiting on God. It is always true that we do not have revivals because we do not sincerely, with a holy abandon, pray, as well as obey God. Of course the right kind of praying would lead us to obedience and power.

The orphan houses in Bristol, England, founded by George Muller, prospered because of prayer. It was so manifest that no one could doubt that the only essential reason that God blessed and sent the means needed was because people expectantly, faithfully prayed. Muller asked nobody for money, and often would not even let his needs be known except to God. What an example to prove that when the Lord's work languishes it is for lack of prayer! And of course I mean the work that is truly the Lord's work. I do not mean that we can by prayer contrary to the will of God get our own work to prosper by saying "in Jesus name." But the work of the Lord's own planning languishes only when the people of God do not obediently pray.

Hudson Taylor and the China Inland Mission are a modern evidence that the work of God languishes only because of prayerlessness and prospers under prayer. When many denominational missions which depended upon denominational organization and promotion for their funds were being overwhelmed with debts and making retrenchments continually, the China Inland Mission, going only by faith, depending on God alone without any organization to raise money, prospered and increased, spreading the gospel to millions and sending

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EVANGELIST JOHN R. RICE
EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

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THE SIN OF PRAYERLESSNESS

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out continually new groups of workers who were cared for in answer to prayer.

In many, many cases when I have been used of God in a blessed revival campaign in some locality one or two saintly Christians have told me, "I have been praying for two years that God would bring you here for these meetings," or "This campaign is the answer to my daily prayer for years." Oh, if people would but pray, pray earnestly, pray effectively, pray with a holy abandon, God's work would not languish. The decay in the churches, the cooling of revival fires, the lukewarmness in the churches is the fruit of our prayerlessness.

Third, countless souls go to Hell because we do not pray. Nothing could more sharply show the wickedness of prayerlessness than this fact, that if Christians do not pray as they ought, many whom they might win, if they prayed, will go to Hell.

It is easy for us to see that people cannot be saved without the gospel. The Bible so clearly says, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14). If no one goes to preach the gospel and if sinners do not hear the gospel, then those who might be saved will not be saved. But it is equally true that if people go without prayer, their ministry will be ineffective, and in proportion as they pray themselves and as they are lifted up to God in earnest prayer by others, their ministry will be powerfully moved by the Spirit of God to the saving of souls. It is utterly impossible to disconnect revival fire and prayer. It is utterly foolish to suppose anyone will have a fruitful ministry that is not held up to God by earnest prayer, either by the minister alone or by his own prayers joined to the prayers of others. Oh, how many poor, lost souls are in Hell today because someone did not pray!

III. What the Sin of Prayerlessness Shows About Our Wicked Hearts

If a man kills somebody, that may show premeditated hate, deliberate murder, or it may show a sudden flare of temper in a fight, or it may show simply carelessness in driving. Or the killing may have been altogether accidental without any blame at all.

When a man gets drunk it may show that he is diseased, enslaved by habit, which is really a sickness. Such a man may deserve more pity than blame, and he may be otherwise generous, honest, loved and greatly respected by those who know him. When a person commits adultery it may show a long and deliberate course of sin and depravity, or it may simply be the result of a sudden gust of passion under unusual temptation, such as the person did not expect and under circumstances where most others might yield, too. All these shocking outward sins show some sin in the heart. But they do not reveal as much wickedness as the sin of prayerlessness, for the sin of prayerlessness reveals some shocking things about the state of heart of all of us who do not pray constantly, who do not live in an attitude of unceasing prayer.

First, prayerlessness shows a lack of real enjoyment of God. We should honestly face the fact that most of us do not really enjoy prayer or we would pray more. We

eat because we are hungry; the body demands food. We sleep because we are sleepy or the body demands rest. We visit people because we enjoy fellowship. If we work harder and the body needs more food, we hunger for it and then eat more. If we are specially in love with someone, we long more for their companionship and spend more hours in their presence when possible. When we are unusually worn and tired, the body demands more rest and we sleep longer if possible. And that simply illustrates the fact that if your heart were hungrier for God you would pray more. If you really enjoyed His presence you would seek it. If you enjoyed praying more than other things you do, then you would do more praying and less reading or playing or eating or sleeping. Prayerlessness proves that we do not really enjoy God.

Let us be honest, each one, in searching his own heart here. Do you not often pray simply as a matter of duty? Two days ago a young man came to me with great joy saying, "Brother Rice, before I heard your message on prayer, prayer had become a burden to me. I prayed because I felt I ought, but it was hard and I did not enjoy it. But now, thank God, it has become a joy to pray!" I am led to believe by the testimony of thousands of individuals that prayer to the average Christian is hard and burdensome. We pray little because we do not enjoy it. We pray as much as we do pray largely out of duty or absolute necessity. And our lackadaisical praying when we do pray, along with the fact that we really pray little at all, proves that our poor, wicked hearts do not feel at home with God, do not enjoy God, do not delight in His presence and conscious fellowship! And how wicked is that sin!

The complaint of Isaiah, quoted by the Saviour was that "This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me" (Matt. 15:8). And Jesus frankly addressed such people, "Ye hypocrites!" How many of us, I wonder, pray in a way that honors Christ with our lips and draw near to Him with our mouths but our hearts are far away! Oh, if our hearts are not in our prayers, if we do not love to draw near to God, if we do not enjoy praying, if prayer is not sweet to us, how sinful are our wicked hearts!

No doubt much of the failure of what little praying we do is indicated by that sweet promise in Jeremiah 29:12, 13, "Then shall ye call upon me, and ye shall go and pray unto me, and I will hearken unto you. And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." Oh, God is not far off! God has toward us, as the preceding verse, Jeremiah 29:11, tells us, "thoughts of peace, and not of evil." God is more eager to hear than we are to pray, if only we shall search for Him with all our hearts!

Have you searched in your own heart about this matter whether you really enjoy the presence of God? If you enjoyed praying more than the other things you do, wouldn't you pray more?

Many a son or daughter, I suppose, loves mother and dad but has little in common with them and seeks rather the company of his or her own age at the dance floor or movie. Perhaps there are honest, good men who love their wives after a fashion but find them drab and uninteresting and hasten away

from home to company they enjoy better or hide themselves with a newspaper or book. How sad that any of us should be like that toward God! If we are saved, born again children of God, then we love Him of course. In our hearts we have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry "Abba, Father." But sad to say, many of us do not really enjoy our Heavenly Father and spend little time in His company, little time or heart in asking for His blessings and receiving those he has offered. Our prayerlessness proves that we do not really enjoy God.

Second, prayerlessness proves our unbelief. Hebrews 11:6 says that "without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him." And Romans 10:14 says, "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?" I suppose that primarily means that lost people do not really call on God for salvation unless in their hearts they believe that He is able and willing to save. Prayer is the proof of faith for a lost sinner. But is it not equally true that prayer is the proof of faith in a Christian? How can we pray if we do not believe it pays? How can we really pray much if we do not believe we get anywhere nor get anything from God? When we are sick we go to the doctor first instead of praying first because really we have more confidence in the doctor than in God. We think of medicine before we think of prayer. And I do not mean that medicine and doctors and hospitals are to be avoided by Christians. God often uses means to do His blessed work. He uses Christians and personal soul winners to save sinners. He uses foods, medicines, treatments, oftentimes to heal the sick. But is it not obvious that a child of God who really believes that the healing depends on God and that the healing, whether through doctors and medicine or without either, must come from God — isn't it obvious that one who believes that will pray before he does other things? I think there is no doubt that our prayerlessness proves that we really have little confidence in getting answers to our prayers. Prayerlessness is a proof of unbelief. And unbelief is a sin, a besetting sin which we are to lay aside, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith (Hebrews 12:1).

I have known people who say, "Yes, I believe in prayer as much as anyone," or, "Sure, I have lots of faith in God," who when they were sick really depended on doctors, and when they were out of jobs really depended on employment agencies and who, when they were in need, called on relatives for help before they called on God! To them faith was just a certain feeling, a general doctrinal position.

But real faith, living faith, absolutely must express itself in calling on God for what we need and desire. From the sum total of our praying let us subtract all the praying we do as a matter of duty and subtract all the praying we do to be seen of men, and the little that remains will be the actual measure of our faith in a God Who hears and answers prayer! Oh, God, forgive us of this sin of unbelief!

Third, our prayerlessness proves our laziness. Prayer is hard work. It demands thought, demands concentration demands persistence. One who becomes great in prayer must overcome every kind of handicap and discouragement and temptation. Satan would keep us from prayer by making us too busy at other matters. Satan would stop our prayer with discouragement, and unbelief. He would distract our minds. So real praying is work, hard work.

It is said of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, "being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44). And many a saint of God has found himself likewise covered with perspiration from the earnest work, the concentration, the pleading of prayer. Brainerd, kneeling in the snow praying for the Indians on his heart, worked at his praying until he did not feel the cold. Charles G. Finney, kneeling on a buffalo robe in the hayloft after a meeting at night prayed long into the wee hours and did not suffer from the upper New

York state winter. I finished a game of college football with a broken nose, and in the labor and concentration of the game I felt no pain at all, though the blood ran down my jersey. In a time of great grief and trouble I went for days with practically no desire for food. Just so, many have learned to agonize in prayer, to labor, as Jacob wrestled with the angel at Peniel (Gen. 32:24-31).

Jacob wrestled with an angel of God in prayer. (Genesis 32:24, 25). Rachel, the barren wife, prayed without ceasing that she might not be outdone by her mocking sister, and of her prayers she said, "with great wrestlings have I wrestled with my sister, and I have prevailed." And Paul tells of Epaphras, the great man of prayer who sent word to the Colossians, "always labouring fervently for you in prayers." And the word laboring means to agonize, to contend, to wrestle. In fact, it is the Greek word from which we get our English word agonize. Oh, what labor real prayer is! And the fact that we do not pray proves that we are lazy, indifferent Christians with little heart for the work of God. We are fat, well fed, indolent, indifferent Christians, or we would pray. Prayerlessness proves laziness.

Fourth, our prayerlessness proves that God is not first in our love and interest and that other things come first. Prayerlessness is almost proof of idolatry. We read the newspapers instead of praying because we are more interested in the things the newspapers talk about than we are in the things we would talk to God about. We spend more time chatting with other people than we do in talking to God because we really think more of other people than we do of God. We Christian workers may even spend more time with our sermons, with our libraries, with our Christian visiting, with our church organizations because we care more about these incidental and secondary matters than we do about the main matters. Remember that the apostles said, "We will give ourselves continually to prayer, and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4). Prayer first, preaching second! I think we preachers are often more concerned with our sermons than we are with getting people saved, more concerned with what we say to man than what we say to God, more concerned to please the ear than we are to save souls by the power of God which only comes through prayer.

Some Christians spend hours a day at hobbies, hobbies that in themselves are innocent and harmless and often useful. But count the time you spend on your hobby and compare it with the time you spend in prayer. Is your hobby of more interest to you than God and His Word and His blessings and His power? Reading is proper, and good reading is commended in the Bible, but compare your reading with your praying; which takes the precedence in your life? Does not our prayerlessness prove that we put prayer of less importance than nearly everything else? Does it not mean that our love, our interest, our desire is on other things first? Prayerlessness, I say, is almost a proof of our idolatry. And the little that we pray proves how little we are really interested in God's will for us and in bringing souls to Christ and advancing the work that is truly His.

Someone will be tempted to say that they have so much work to do, good work, honorable, necessary work, that they cannot pray as much as my teaching here infers that they should. Well, we ought to be able to pray all the time. "Pray without ceasing," and "Men ought always to pray and not to faint," the Bible commands. That means praying while busy at all other things. But we ought also to have long seasons every day in which we would lay aside other matters and give ourselves altogether to prayer. And you need not say that is impossible, for the greatest men of God, the busiest, found time for that kind of praying.

If you will go through Paul's epistles and find how many people he addressed, reminding them that he prayed for them in every prayer or prayed for them every day, you will see that Paul was given to much prayer, hours of prayer, daily. And Jesus spent long seasons in prayer. He went up into a mountain to pray. He prayed all night in the wilderness. He prayed, perhaps, for

hours in the Garden of Gethsemane.

Martin Luther said that he had so much work to do that he could never get it done for God unless he prayed three hours a day! How Martin Luther labored in prayer! Prayer to him was fighting, wrestling, agonizing. And once as he prayed Satan became so real to him, taunting, tempting, interfering, that Martin Luther threw the ink bottle at him! And the splash on the wall was long showed to visitors to remind us of how real was prayer to Martin Luther.

Preachers, specially evangelists, must get late to bed, and so often they are late risers. Speaking in the evenings and finding it hard to relax and sleep immediately after the greatest labor and excitement of the day, preachers get the best rest after midnight. But D. L. Moody arose regularly, we are told, at four o'clock in the morning that he might have at least a full hour with God in prayer and with the Bible before anybody else on the place should be awake. And Hudson Taylor had a custom of waking in the midst of the night to spend an hour or two undisturbed with God. C. T. Studd in Africa rose at 3:00 a.m. to pray. It is a remarkable fact that the men who have been the most abundant in labors for God have been the ones who really spent the greatest amount of time in prayer. Our excuses are really alibis. We do not pray more because we do not think prayer is as important as the other things which we do. We think sleep is more important than prayer. We think food is more important than prayer. We think visiting is more important than prayer. We think preaching is more important than prayer. Our prayerlessness really proves that other things come first in our estimation and in our love.

IV. How to Overcome the Sin of Prayerlessness

I feel I know all too little about prayer, and yet humbly I would make the following suggestions about how to overcome the sin of prayerlessness.

First, I would set apart a season of time early in every day to pray, along with meditation on the Bible. The earlier, the better. It ought to be before breakfast. One great missionary had a motto, "No Bible, no breakfast." If he couldn't find time to read the Bible and pray, then he would not take time to eat. Brother, that motto will make an impression on the callow carnality of us who put our stomachs before God if we will but adopt it! Put prayer really first by having a real season of prayer before anything else of importance in the day. You probably will have to rise earlier than you now rise to do it. You may have to leave off other matters of lesser importance. But "those that seek me early shall find me," says the Lord in Proverbs 8:17.

Second, make a habit of praying through about every burden and problem that comes to you. Sometimes we cannot in one day get the full answer to a great prayer, but we can every day, I believe, get a sweet peace to know that God has heard us, and that we left the thing in the hands of our Heavenly Father and He has smiled into our hearts and given us peace. You may not, as you pray in one given season, see the salvation of the man for whom you pray, but you can pray until you have sweet assurance that God has undertaken and will do the thing you desire. Or you can pray until God's Holy Spirit helps you see how you should modify your prayer to fit with the plan of God.

This kind of praying will mean that you do not continue bowed down under anxieties and worries. Leave every worry, every anxiety with Jesus every day.

Third, take time to pray about things as they come up. Years ago as a preacher I found it impossible to remember all the requests for prayer that would come to me in a day's time so as to pray for them

(Continued on page four)

HEAR ROBERT WITTY

WCKY — Cincinnati, 1530 kc., — Thursday
Friday, Saturday, 6:45 a.m.; Sunday, 8:00 a.m.

OTHER STATIONS EACH WEEK DAY

WJAX — Jacksonville, Fla., 930 kc., 7:30 a.m.
WRDW — Augusta, Ga., 1490 kc., 7:45 a.m.
WRUF — Gainesville, Fla., 850 kc., 7:45 a.m.
KSLM — Salem, Oregon, 1390 kc., 7:45 a.m.

MAILING ADDRESS—Box 2, Jacksonville, Fla.



"As in the Days of Noah"

(Continued from page one)

hating people, a day of wrath and judgment is coming. Joel 2, for example, says: "For the day of the Lord cometh, for it is nigh at hand, a day of darkness and of gloominess, a day of clouds and of thick darkness, as the morning spread upon the mountains; a great people and a strong; there hath not been ever the like, neither shall be any more after it, even to the years of many generations."

And in the New Testament it is recorded in Jude that Enoch prophesied, of that event saying, "Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints." For what purpose? "To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him." He is coming first FOR His own and then He comes WITH His own in the day of the Lord which is the day of judgment.

Christ Is Coming in Judgment As in Noah's Day

And as it was in the days of Noah so shall also it be in the days of the coming of the Son of man. For they knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." And I want these words to burn their way right into your heart. As the flood came and took them all away, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man when He comes in judgment. Now God's Word says, "It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." And I say unto you, unsaved friend, wake up! The day of

Irwin A. Moon —

(Continued from page one)

of the interest shown by men in the service.

Here's just one little story with a big point. Among the two tons of scientific equipment used to illustrate Mr. Moon's messages is a recording machine for making small records which the boys send home. One night a young man asked if he could make a record for his mother. It ran something like this: "Hello, Mom. I hope you are all right. Mom, I have caused you much unhappiness. You know I've been a bum. But, Mom, something has happened to me, and I'm a new man; and when this is over and I get back, I'm going to make up for the past." That boy had confessed Christ as his Saviour.

Two days after these meetings closed, those same boys entrained for the battle front. How wonderful to know that many of these soldier lads were rejoicing in a newly found Saviour and that hundreds carried with them Gospels of John and tracts similar to the one enclosed.

This letter is addressed to a short list of friends I hope will become vitally interested in this undertaking. Naturally we cannot ask these men in the service to support Mr. Moon's work. We wouldn't ask them if we could. But we do ask you, for the boys' sake, to help us make the continuance of this work possible. It costs considerable.

Here is an opportunity for an investment in a side of the war of which few will think. What shall we do for the multitude of American young men headed for places of danger — moral danger as well as physical? Here is a plan that works. It is not an experiment. We have seen 500 men at a time sit with rapt attention — yes, and 1,000 and 1,500.

Thank you, good friend. I shall be deeply grateful for your partnership in this enterprise. Make your check out to the Moody Bible Institute, but mail it to me personally. We cannot allow this to get in the way of our regular work, for we must continue giving free training to all the young people possible. This is an extra job and demands extra money.

Sincerely yours,
Will H. Houghton
President

If you want to help in the good work, send your offering please, to Dr. Houghton, at 153 Institute Place, Chicago. Checks may be made to Moody Bible Institute, but send to Dr. Houghton, and designate for Irwin A. Moon Fund.

judgment is coming and I believe with all my heart that the world is fast approaching the day of judgment, the coming of the Son of Man, that great day of the Lord. The shadows of the coming great tribulation are becoming darker and longer. Was there ever such a time when nations were rising against nations, kingdoms against kingdoms, wars and rumors of war? We are now witnessing almost universal world-wide war. As it was in the days of Noah, according to the sixth chapter of Genesis, great days of wickedness and barbarous dealings, so it will be in the days of the Son of Man. There were great days of violence then, there are days of violence now; days of godlessness then, days of godless indifference now, throwing over all moral and spiritual restraint.

Now just for a moment; this present world conflict in this last analysis is this; the world right now is witnessing the onward rush of the axis, of godless, Christ-hating nations on the one hand (and I am speaking plainly), that is, the forces of evil are arrayed against the forces of righteousness and liberty-loving people. When it comes time to take off His restraining hand, and the last soul is saved that completes the body of Christ, then the man of sin, the Antichrist, who will become a world dictator, will be revealed, and then great tribulation will come and the days of Noah will be repeated. I believe we are on the very verge, the foreshadow of that period. But as long as the true church, the body of Christ, is here upon the earth, the man of sin the world dictator, cannot and will not be revealed. But all signs point to this one fact; we are mighty close to the manifestation of that antichrist. I beseech you, members of the body of Christ, let's pray, let's work, let's labor to win the last soul to complete the body of Christ, to hasten His coming, the day of Christ when He comes for His own. As long as the church is here, the true church — not the denomination in so many words but the church which is His body — as long as that true church is here, the day of grace is still open. How long it will be open and how long before it will be forever closed, I do not know.

There are three outstanding points in this verse in reference to "the days of Noah" which will be outstanding in the day of Christ's visible return, the coming day of the Lord. Will you notice this: "the flood came and took them all away." The Lord in Matthew 24 points His finger of authority to this one fact. A person by the name of Noah really lived, a great flood came and took all the ungodly, unbelieving people away. Deny the flood, try to explain it away, but that does not change the fact that God's eternal Son says that there was a flood in the days of Noah. God has spoken and that settles it with me. But your head up against that, deny it, but it won't change the fact.

Universal Destruction

(1) The destruction of the deluge was universal. Men in that day were wealthy, rich in gold, silver, merchandise, land, farms, ranches; but the flood came and took that class all away. Rafts made of costly cedars, even though they had been made of the cedars of Lebanon, were destroyed in the flood. Towers of the most beautiful masonry could not withstand the flood. So in the coming day of the Lord. When He comes back taking vengeance on them that know not God and that obey not the gospel, the robes of your own righteousness, be they ever so beautiful and ever so costly, will not stand the test. In fact, I read in the sixth of Revelation about that day, that "there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood; and the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together, and every mountain and island were moved out of their places. And the kings of the earth, and the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bondman, and every free man, hid themselves in the dens and in the rocks of the mountains; and said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the

Lamb: for the great day of his wrath is come; and who shall be able to stand?" (Rev. 6:12-17). And do you mean to tell me you will be willing to stand up with your puny robe of righteousness, your little excuses of morality and say you will take a chance, not coming under the sheltering shed blood of the cross? God forbid! Because in the day of Noah there were those who were poor and hard pressed, working to keep body and soul together, as well as the rich, but the flood came and took them all away. Riches cannot save and will not save, neither will the poor man be delivered because of his poverty. God's grace and justice are independent of society, rank, station, and condition. God is no respecter of persons. There were learned men in those days, men who searched the stars and tried to fathom the mysteries of the stars above. There were men who searched the earth for rare metals, men who dug deep into the secret chambers of knowledge and science; but the flood came and took them all away. The flood swept away the doctors of law, doctors of medicine, doctors of philosophy, doctors of scientific learning — the flood came and took them all away. Many, no doubt, were zealous in the cause of religion, for they had religion in Noah's day, a form of godliness. But the trouble was, they did not have a heart-knowledge or the experience of the one and only true way of approach. They were all taken away. The blasphemers, the godless — they, too, were taken away. The old and the young perished, too. Men who lived to a ripe old age were taken away. The young, in the prime of youth, robust, healthy athletic — all were taken away. In view of it all, Noah, God's man, preached and warned and instructed and pleaded. He, himself, being warned of the coming judgment, believed God's Word and prepared an ark to the saving of himself and his household. No doubt they stood by and criticised Noah and said, "Why Noah, you are crazy to build an ark! The idea, Noah, pitching the ark both within and without with pitch. That's a new invention. And then look, only one window and one door — how ridiculous!" No doubt some of these great, learned men could have built a better looking, a finer looking boat with a lot of frills and fancies, but would it have stood the coming flood? And so people today say, "Away with the cross! Away with the blood sprinkled way! Why, listen, we can build better religion, we can write a better book and we need to get a new slant on religion." Well, listen to me anything that leaves out the cross of Calvary is out of the pit and from the devil himself. If you are ever to be saved, you must needs come home by the way of the cross. Don't forget that. Paul, coming to the Corinthian church, that great center of philosophy and learning, said, "I determined not to know anything among you save Jesus Christ and him crucified."

People Absorbed in Life and Pleasure. Neglect Their Souls

(2) Well, when the flood came, it found them eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, with not one thought about their eternal souls and their eternal destiny. So it will be in the day of Christ. Men and women everywhere are taken up with the cares of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches, going about their social events, eating, drinking, giving in marriage, with no concern about the hereafter, but a universal indifference and carelessness. Why, listen, let a man in the realm of the physical become ill and he will call for the doctor. Let a man be burned, and he will let out a yell. He is concerned. But in the realm of the spiritual, there is indifference, they are asleep, there is no concern. Yet Noah preached, honest and upright. And beloved, hardly one paid any attention to him. Yet today, in these closing days, God's faithful ambassadors and preachers preach all over the land of the coming wrath and of the coming judgment, that Christ, God's Son, is coming back in great fury and wrath, treading the winepress of the wrath of Almighty God one day. Still men and women go on unconcerned. Friend of mine, the day of judgment is coming. Will you wake up?

Ark Prepared Saved All Inside So Christ Is Only Saviour Today

(3) Just this one thing in closing

THE SIN OF PRAYERLESSNESS

(Continued from page three)

when I slept or the next morning. So I formed a habit of stopping to pray for every case about which I was impressed that I ought to pray, at the time it was mentioned. And then I never promise to pray for any matter in the future except as God shall lay it on my heart and bring it to my mind. I have found a great peace in going to God with every burden, the moment I feel the need for prayer about it. And one of the sweet and blessed results is a constant companionship and fellowship with God.

Fourth, leave off the formalities and let prayer be simply talking with God. Every Christian many times a day should stop and say, "Lord, I did wrong in that. Forgive me!" or "Lord, help me to know what to say to this man." Connect prayer with every detail of your life. Hallesby, in his great book on prayer, says that we ought to pray about everyone we meet. Leave off the forms of set prayers and get accustomed to talking to God as simply as a little child to his mother or as a wife to her husband. Some people pray with all the stiffness and unreal formality of being introduced to the king and queen at court. When you pray you will do well to leave off the powdered wigs, the knee breeches, the formal introductions, the curtsies, and the bowing low and the walking out backward!

Fifth, I would set out to follow

and that is this. God warned Noah and he believed God and he prepared an ark to the saving of his household. And he built that ark according to divine specifications and pitched it without and within with pitch. That word pitch is the same word as atonement, the same word "to cover." The beautiful part of it is, one day God said to Noah, "One hundred and twenty years is past, you have preached and worked faithfully. Come on in now, The flood is going to come. Come into the ark." He didn't say go. He said, come. That is a gracious invitation. When Noah and his family and the animals spoken of there in Genesis were in the ark, God reached down and shut the one door. He put His arm right through the bolt of that door and no man could open it or shut it again. Seven days were over and then the flood waters came upon the earth.

I can see back there that old ark riding above the waters of universal judgment. Nobody fell out of that divinely-appointed refuge. Nobody was dragged out. Nobody died in it. Nobody was left to perish in it. All who went in came out unharmed. All were preserved. So in Christ, all who come to Him by faith, accept Him as their personal Saviour, will be secure for time and eternity. I preach it with all the force of my heart. There is no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus, and no separation to those in Christ. The day of judgment is coming. Are you ready? Let's bow our heads in prayer.

Prayer: Our Father, we thank Thee for Thy great love to provide an ark of safety to every sin-sick soul if they will just come by faith and enter into the ark and shoot the prayer out right from the heart, Lord, I believe, repent and believe," confess their sins and say, "Lord, be merciful to me a sinner," and come into the ark, they will be saved for time and eternity and ride above the waters of coming judgment. The day of judgment is coming. Oh, Heavenly Father, Thou art shaking this old world, ringing the door bells with every war, every rumor of war, every earthquake, every pestilence and the things Thou hast spoken of, warned of the truth of the coming day of judgment. And as soon as the last soul is saved, and completes your Body, we are going to be caught up but for the world there will be a time of tribulation and trouble. God grant not one family circle will be broken when Jesus comes for His own.

How about it, friend of mine, unsaved, are you ready? Will you look up into God's face and say, "Lord, I believe, I come the blood-sprinkled way, just as I am without one plea, but that Thy blood was shed for me." Will you do that? God bless you wherever you are. Then may you be a real soul winner and a real witness in these days to come.

the Bible examples and teachings about prayer.

Jacob prayed all night, so did Jesus. Then I would enter into the fullness of prayer life by praying all night. I will never forget the fullness of blessing that came in some nights of prayer in the Galilean Baptist Church in Dallas, and when I prayed until two o'clock in the morning in a Y.M.C.A. at St. Paul, Minnesota, and when I prayed with a great group in the Peoples Church in Toronto, Canada, led by Dr. Oswald J. Smith, in a half night of prayer. I think it is shameful that the great experiences of prayer in the Bible are not duplicated in the lives of modern Christians. By God's grace let us enter into these experiences.

Esther and her maidens fasted and prayed three days and nights. The people of Nineveh prayed without either eating or drinking for days until God heard and spared the city and saved them. The apostles fasted and prayed for ten days before Pentecost, as you see by comparing Matthew 9:14, 15 with Acts 1:13, 14. The Bible has many accounts of the saints who fasted while they prayed, Ezra and his companions, David, Paul and Barnabas fasted. Have you ever gone without meals or spent a day without food while you sought the bread from Heaven and while your mind was absorbed in God and seeking His power alone? If Pharisees entered into fasting as a form, a work of merit, cannot Christians fast and pray for a burden for souls and to be filled with the power of God?

Daniel went, he tells us, for three full weeks in which he ate no pleasant bread and ate no meat. (Dan. 10:2,3). And should not we sometimes have times of mourning, of confessing our sins, of waiting on God in which we might for weeks go eating only moderately, doing only such work as we must, until certain great problems are settled, certain victories won, certain blessings obtained? I recall in some of the most blessed of revival campaigns, some where great numbers were saved, that for days I felt little interest in food or sleep, I lost weight, I felt a constant burden of prayer until the victory was won and we began to see a breaking out of revival fires and the salvation of many. Would it not be blessed some time to follow the permission given I Corinthians 7:5 and by mutual, loving agreement husband and wife stay apart for a few days "that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer."

I have known homes in which for a certain season the beds were quickly spread, the meals prepared were of the simplest, and there was little of the normal entertainment while the housewife felt led to give herself to an earnest burden of prayer.

Sometimes Bible characters knelt in prayer. Peter, called to pray by the side of the dead Dorcas, put them all forth and knelt down and prayed (Acts 9:40). But the same Peter simply stood and pronounced the curse of God upon Ananias and Sapphira, though it had in it the elements of prayer. Joshua stopped fighting only long enough to command the sun to stand still, which seemed a very bold prayer of great faith. Solomon stood in the temple with his hands stretched out and prayed at the dedication of the temple (II Chronicles 6:12). Jesus sometimes stood to pray, but in the Garden of Gethsemane He fell on His face and prayed (Matt. 26:39). And from all this let us learn the lesson that prayer is not in the form. And let us get out of our ruts, pray when we stand or pray when we sit. In times of great emergency and distress we ought surely to be on our very faces on the floor before God, pleading and waiting on Him. But at other times we ought like David to awake in the night, communing with our own hearts upon our beds (Psalm 4:4), and again pray at evening, morning and at noon (Psalm 55:17).

Let us seek to enter into all the wealth of prayer in the Bible. Let us pray as much as Bible characters. Let us weep as much as they wept. Let us fast as much as they fasted. Let us make prayer the biggest work of our lives and the greatest enjoyment, the unceasing activity.

Are you ready now to confess to God your sin of prayerlessness?